Negotiations from 1-4 October, 2007 at Bangkok. The primary objective of the initiative was to provide a platform to the businessmen and officials of the two countries to zero in the areas of mutual cooperation, potential for investment and trade in the identified sectors and the need to initiate fruitful dialogues. This visit was followed by another visit by a Thai delegation headed by the Deputy Minister of Industry of Thailand to the States of Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh and Assam from 9-12 January, 2008 to further explore the areas of cooperation through exchange of information and visits of organized trade, investment & tourism delegations to promote Thailand-India trade and investment.

The Minister for External Affairs had also taken a high level meeting on 31.10.2007 on the Look East Policy with the Chief Ministers of the North Eastern States and the Central Ministries concerned so as to formulate a strategy for a meaningful involvement of the North Eastern Region in the Look East Policy. A number of important issues emerged from this interaction which are being followed up.

Compensatory afforestation scheme

656. DR. GYAN PRAKASH PILANIA:
SHRI LALIT KISHORE CHATURVEDI:
Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government plans to bring 6 million hectares of land under forests in 10 years as part of its Green India Programme;

(b) if so, achievements thereof;

(c) whether Government planned to green 12.6 lakh hectares under the compensatory afforestation scheme but has managed to do so in only 5.32 lakh hectares till April, 2008, achieving 42 per cent of its target;

(d) whether between 2005 - 08 only 24,923 hectares was afforested compared to the target of 2.66 lakh hectares under the scheme; and

(e) whether mandatory compensatory afforestation scheme is in shambles?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Central Government proposes to raise plantations in degraded forest areas over an area of 6.0 million hectares in two phases.

The Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India has introduced "The Compensatory Afforestation Fund Bill, 2008" in Lok Sabha on 5th May, 2008 during the preceding Budget Session of Parliament. After passing of the above Bill, Compensatory Afforestation Fund (CAF) wilt be created and the Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA) will also be operationalised to enable the Ministry of Environment and Forests to release money to the States/Union Territories for various purposes including plantations under Green India Programme.

(c) to (e) During the period 25.10.1980 to 30.09.2008 an area of 12.72 million hectares was stipulated for raising Compensatory Afforestation. However, the target had become difficult to be achieved due to various unforeseen reasons. As on 30.09.2008, Compensatory Afforestation has been completed over 5,33,107 hectares.